

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) A method of producing a vehicle steering wheel, said method comprising the steps of:

a) producing a one-piece steering wheel skeleton having a hub, at least one spoke and a steering wheel rim by one of casting and injection-molding processes and not by securing separate parts together, and, forming recesses in the ~~on~~ said steering wheel rim during one of the said casting and injection-molding processes,

b) gluing an intermediate layer made of soft foam directly onto the said steering wheel rim over the said recesses, and

c) covering the said intermediate layer with leather by gluing the said leather directly onto the said intermediate layer.

22. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 21, wherein said step of forming the said recesses in the ~~on~~ said steering wheel rim includes the step of forming recesses on opposite sides of the said steering wheel rim, with respect to a cross-section of the said steering wheel rim.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

23. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 22, wherein said step of producing the said one-piece steering wheel skeleton including the step of forming projections on the said steering wheel rim which extend approximately radially with respect to the said cross-section of the said steering wheel rim.

24. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 23, further including the step of bending the said projections with a deburring press to cover the said recesses, prior to said step of gluing the said intermediate layer onto the said steering wheel rim.

25. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 21, wherein said step of producing the said one-piece steering wheel skeleton includes a the step of producing the said steering wheel rim with a cross-section which defines a the final outer geometry of a the finished vehicle steering wheel, prior to performing said steps of gluing the said intermediate layer and covering with said leather.

26. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 25, further including a step ~~the~~ steps of selecting an intermediate layer made of soft foam having a constant thickness throughout and selecting leather having a constant thickness throughout, prior to performing said steps of gluing the said intermediate layer and covering the said intermediate layer with said leather.

AVAILABLE COP

27. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 21, wherein said step of producing the said steering wheel skeleton by casting comprises one of an aluminum and magnesium pressure die-casting.

28. (Currently Amended) A method of producing a vehicle steering wheel, said method comprising the steps of:

a) producing a one-piece steering wheel skeleton having a hub, at least one spoke and a steering wheel rim by one of casting and injection-molding and not by securing separate parts together, and

b) forming projections on the steering wheel rim, the projections extending approximately radially with respect to a cross-section of the steering wheel rim, and

c) gluing a cover consisting of an inner intermediate layer made of soft foam and an outer layer made of leather directly onto the steering wheel rim over the projections so that an the inner part of the intermediate layer directly engages the said steering wheel rim.

29. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 28 wherein, said step of producing the said steering wheel skeleton by casting comprises one of an aluminum and magnesium pressure die-casting.

30.-34. (Canceled)

35. (Currently Amended) A method of producing a vehicle steering wheel, said method comprising the steps of:

a) producing a one-piece steering wheel skeleton having a hub, at least one spoke and a steering wheel rim by one of casting and injection-molding and not by securing separate parts together, and, forming recesses in the ~~on~~ said steering wheel rim during one of the said casting and injection-molding processes, and

b) gluing a cover consisting of an inner intermediate layer made of soft foam and an outer layer made of leather directly onto the steering wheel rim over the recesses so that the inner intermediate layer directly engages the said steering wheel rim.

36. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 35, wherein said step of forming recesses in the ~~on~~ said steering wheel rim during one of the said casting and injection-molding processes includes the steps of forming recesses on both an said underside and a side opposite the said underside of the said steering wheel rim, with respect to a cross-section of the said steering wheel rim.

37. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 36, wherein the step of forming recesses ~~said steering wheel rim~~ includes a the step of forming projections on the said steering wheel rim which extend approximately radially with respect to the said cross-section of the said steering wheel rim.

Serial No. 09/996,274

38. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 37, further including a the step of bending the said projections with a deburring press to cover the said recesses, prior to said step of gluing the said cover onto the said steering wheel rim.

39 (Canceled)

BEST AVAILABLE